

Publix Where People Create Impact



Impact Report

#01

Publix Where People Create Impact

Content

A group of people are sitting around a white plastic table outdoors. A large red umbrella is positioned over the table. The people are engaged in conversation and eating. On the table, there are several bottles of drinks, glasses, and plates of food. The background shows a brick wall and other people sitting at tables in the distance.

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Foreword



A Democratic Public Sphere Is Created by People Who Take on Responsibility

Dear readers,

In September 2024, after seven years of planning and construction, we opened Publix as a house for journalism and the public sphere. Since then, the nearly 4,000-square-metre building has been up and running, with offices, studios, event spaces and a public canteen. Our mission is to strengthen journalism and civil society, because an informed public is the foundation of our democracy.

In this impact report, we take a look back at our first full year in operation and ask: what kind of impact is Publix having? We'll hear answers from project partners, fellows, funders, and around 30 of our residents – the organisations that work here every day in the Publix building.

Their stories illustrate the impact made by the Publix building, our community, and our program, both in Neukölln and beyond.

We've identified four central impact fields: Publix strengthens common-good-oriented journalism by developing new business and funding models, and it supports editorial work through the digital transformation. At

the same time we promote higher-quality reporting on key issues such as education and technology.

The second area of impact is social cohesion. As a space for dialogue, Publix brings together people from the media, academia, and civil society to discuss topics ranging from political polarization and the Middle East conflict to social inequality.

With programs such as the Tech Journalism Fellowship, the Reporting the Machines conference series, as well as through the work of our residents, Publix helps journalists build technological expertise.

We also foster media and news literacy among children and young people through our writing workshops and annual one-day events.

Publix offers a space for exchange, collaboration, and new ideas. This report shows the results, and it serves as an enthusiastic invitation to come and be a part of it.

Yours,
Maria Exner,
Director of Publix



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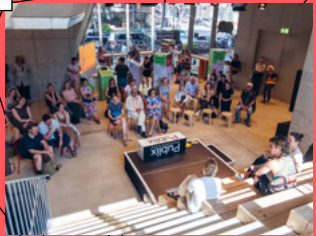
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Enabling Innovation, Diversifying Impact



Constructed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in 1942, *Building 20* was meant to be temporary. But it went on to host researchers from completely disparate disciplines all working under one roof. The chance encounters that followed led to one of the most important innovations of the twentieth century. Yet, the key was not an ideal design concept for the building but the physical proximity and the shared sense of neighbourly camaraderie. MIT later described Building 20 as a “magical incubator”, and today it has attained legendary status.

Publix is on its way to becoming a sort of *Building 20* at the intersection of media and civil society. The building was designed so that newsrooms, think tanks, and civil society organisations could come together under one roof, crossing paths in the corridors and at the coffee machine. Each year, thousands of visitors come to Publix for background briefings, meetings, studio productions, conferences, and overnight stays. With a diverse program of events and projects, Publix also speaks to key audiences such as journalists, teachers, and young adults from the local neighbourhood.

The result is a constant flow of different perspectives, conversations, and initiatives.

And it’s precisely those chance encounters that make Publix such an innovative space, one from which so many cooperative projects have emerged. One such project has now been underway since the end of 2025. Funded by the Postcode Lottery, the satellite image bureau, Vertical52, produced a feasibility study for an independent satellite constellation. Its aim is to ensure that news organisations continue to have access to satellite imagery even if governments restrict commercial or state-controlled sources, as happened during the attacks on Iran in spring 2026.

Entirely new organisations have also been springing up at the Publix building. The Media Forward Fund (see page 17) was launched at Publix, and the German-language edition of the science publication, *The Conversation*, is currently being set up here. The Save Social initiative also chose the Publix building to host the press conference of its launch.

Academics from Berlin and Innsbruck are researching serendipity in the Publix building. By the time our next impact report is published, we hope to understand even more about the role these happy coincidences and chance encounters play in shaping our community.



JX FUND
EUROPEAN FUND FOR
JOURNALISM IN EXILE

RF **30**
JAHRE
REPORTER
OHNE GRENZEN

NETZWERK
RECHERCHE

SEEK
initiative

**MEDIA
FORWARD
FUND**

mdif media
development
investment
fund

THE CONVERSATION

CORRECTIV

klimareporter°

E Investigate
Europe

**WORT
& BILD
VERLAG**

**tell
me
why**
Filmproduktion

**URBAN
JOURNALISM
NETWORK**

**HEAD
LINER**

Rethinking ✌ Journalism



What needs to change for journalism to better serve the common good? Journalists need time and resources for research while newsrooms must provide access to participation and dialogue. They both need support by way of new funding models, particularly at the local level. Publix brings together the people best placed to make this happen.



Investigative Journalism for the Common Good

Justus von Daniels, Editor-in-Chief, **CORRECTIV**

“The ideal scenario is that we’re at the station right now” says Justus von Daniels. “We’re always drawn to places where everyone is welcome.” He looks out the window of the Publix building down onto Hermannstraße, the brightly lit ads and banners, the bakeries and cafes, the shisha bars and heavy traffic. He means places like Neukölln, home to perspectives and stories that get far too little attention.

Justus von Daniels has been Editor-in-Chief of Correctiv since 2019, sharing the role with Anette Dowideit since 2024. The editorial team is known for its in-depth investigative research. The repercussions of its Secret Plan investigation into far-right plans for mass deportations continue to shape the team’s work two years after publication. Meanwhile, that team has moved on to investigations into corruption, political networks, environmental scandals, consumer protection, abuse in football, and, most recently, the Catholic Church. Correctiv is Germany’s largest public-interest news organisation and has its main offices in Essen and Berlin. Its team of almost 60 staff members is the biggest in the Publix building, which had always been the vision.

Correctiv’s journalism strives for constant dialogue with its audience as well as complete transparency as to how its reporting is produced. Most importantly, it is funded by donations and foundations. “We don’t go around in trench coats or sit poring over the puzzle

pieces before coming out with some huge story many months later. We want to bring journalists and the public together.” To do so requires a space to meet in, where political or professional decision-makers can be invited in to talk, in short: a place where things can be scaled up. “Publix, this house for journalism and the public sphere in Berlin also grew out of an idea that originated at Correctiv”, says von Daniels.

Investigative journalism in Germany has experienced remarkable growth over the past decade. That rise appears closely linked to declining trust in traditional institutions and a growing demand for reliable sources of orientation. At times, investigative reporting has itself helped dismantle outdated structures. At the same time, it is a natural product of the digital information age: collective knowledge, growing demands for transparency, and an understanding – one that social media has really accelerated – that we are all senders and receivers, producers and consumers. This is one of the guiding principles of Correctiv, second only to its commitment to transparent and common-good-oriented research. It’s “our education concept” says Justus von Daniels: “we turn people into journalists and get them involved in our work”. One such example is the Correctiv-Faktenforum, where a dedicated community is guided by Correctiv’s editorial team to combat disinformation.

“Our research aims to help readers make an informed decision. You’re a person within a community, you’re part of a democracy, and now you can decide for yourself what to do with this information.”

Justus von Daniels, Editor-in-Chief, CORRECTIV



Is disseminating the investigative reporter's scepticism among the wider public a good way to build trust? "Looking closely and scrutinizing things is fundamentally a good thing, as long as that scepticism serves a purpose," says Correctiv's editor-in-chief. "Our research aims to help readers make an informed decision. You're a person within a community, you're part of a democracy, and now you can decide for yourself what to do with this information." These are humanistic values: bringing enlightenment and empowering people to think for themselves. Or, to put it more concretely, Correctiv's role is to uncover, accompany, curate and moderate. Correctiv first saw the full potential of this approach with its major investigation "Who Owns Hamburg?" says von Daniels, and it was quite fascinating. As he tells it: "we put on a lot of events and got people in for all sorts of forums. Over the

course of six months, it gathered so much momentum that everybody in the city had something to say about it. It really felt as though something was beginning to shift. After a big investigation like that comes out, when new initiatives get started, and people think 'ok, it's on us now, we need more transparency about what's going on' – for me, that's where you see the impact" says von Daniels.

A lot of new project ideas get their start here at the Publix building. The Correctiv team also runs into other residents at events or in the café and they get to talking about what they're working on: "Hey, you guys are amazing at such and such, we should team up". The same thing applies to strategizing together on a more structural level, in terms of finding allies and building more connections. "It's a bit like a third place for our kind of journalism". A grand station, in the best sense possible.

People at



BEYOND NEWS: Rethinking Journalism

For journalism, the pressure is on: the media sector is plagued by a loss of trust, disinformation, platform dependency, and a shortage of young talent. No single media organisation can tackle these problems alone. Hoping to have an impact on the entire sector, Publix teamed up with ARD and a number of other media organisations, including Zeit, ZDF and dpa. Together, they launched BEYOND NEWS – a conference for young media makers focusing on the crucial issues of the future: how can credible journalism succeed in times of polarization? Which platforms best reach young target groups? How is AI changing journalism? And how much personal visibility can journalism sustain?

BEYOND NEWS thrives on a diversity of perspectives: around 150 young journalists from television and social media, radio, print and online outlets, local and national media,

public, private and non-profit newsrooms are all brought together. Just how productive this collaborative approach would be was already clear at the preparation stage. Selected participants met at Publix to curate the central topics and goals of the event.

Held during Hamburg's Press Freedom Week, the conference marked the beginning of a long-term dialogue between media organisations. It gave rise to seven demands for the journalism of tomorrow: → publix.de/news/beyond-news-2025





Nina Grunenberg Fellowship

Since 2024, Publix has awarded the Nina Grunenberg Fellowship, creating the conditions for in-depth reporting and fresh perspectives on Germany's education system and the way it is covered by the media.

"With the Nina Grunenberg Fellowship, I was able to concentrate intensively on education-related topics for four weeks, which was enriching in many ways: exchanges with academics and policy makers, contact with the other fellows, and insights into everyday life at schools. I also grew more confident in my ability to do justice to education in all its complexity" said journalist, Franziska Pröll.



Tell Me Why

"In researching and developing high-quality television documentaries, we want to get relevant topics across in ways that both inform and engage audiences. We're journalists. Our unbiased research aims to take viewers into a world that would otherwise be closed to them. The film, *Death in the Delivery Room*, in particular, was a big success for us. Our reporter, Steffi Unsleber, did research on childbirth for four years. Quality journalism requires time, financial resources, and new ways of reaching audiences that don't compromise on relevance and journalistic standards. The Publix building is a valuable location for our productions: for filming, for background briefings, and for interviews. We also use the editing suites. We're delighted to have everything we need under one roof." — Julia Friedrichs, author and co-founder of the film production company *tell me why*.

Building Organisations: Constant Testing and Learning

How the **Media Forward Fund** supports projects like the news platform Spatz. *By Alexandra Borchardt*

Publix co-founded the Media Forward Fund in 2023 to strengthen independent and common-good-oriented quality media in Switzerland, Austria and Germany. Today, the MFF operates independently as a non-profit organisation that supports common-good-oriented media projects by investing in their business

models and providing them with continuing education programs. As a member of the jury, Publix Director Maria Exner brings the experience and best practices developed at Publix into the Media Forward Fund's work. Founded in Switzerland, the Spatz news platform is supported by the MFF's general funding program.



"Spatz combines a clear common-good-oriented mission with a platform developed by users, an appetite for growth, and ambitious goals. With this approach, we've already

helped 11 media companies to scale up their business over the past eighteen months."

Martin Kotynek, founding director of the Media Forward Fund



↑ The Jury of the Media Forward Fund

→ Hannes Grassegger,
Founder of Spatz



The Spatz News Platform

The technology journalist, Hannes Grassegger, had no intention of starting a new organisation. What concerned him was the state of social cohesion. He believed it was being undermined by the balance of power in the information economy: traditional news organisations were seeing their revenues steadily erode, while social media platforms fuelled polarization. What would information infrastructure that provides people with reliable local information look like?

Grassegger explored this question in an essay that caught the attention of two Swiss foundations. And so, Spatz was born: a decentralized, participative, and AI-supported platform for local journalism, which lets the public take their information needs into their own hands.

The concept is concise: locals deliver the better part of the news themselves, AI supplements this with information drawn from existing sources, and one person does revisions for quality. The goal: to produce a village newspaper in four hours, distributed via newsletters and WhatsApp.

Spatz makes it easier for people to participate in the life of their communities. The common-good-oriented proposal won over the Publix-based jury of the Media Forward

Fund, which helps companies accelerate their growth. In 2025, Spatz received €400,000 to expand their operation.

As of March 2026, Spatz has been successfully running 16 editions in 44 Swiss municipalities, and there are plans to export the model abroad. The team is also testing additional revenue streams – including memberships and advertising – to achieve long-term financial independence.

Starting new organisations means constant testing and learning. What has Grassegger's team learned? To listen, and to develop products based on the needs of users. Another lesson learned: many long-held assumptions within the media industry simply do not hold up, such as the idea that people won't pay for journalism or that they outright reject algorithms. "When you're getting a company off the ground, you have to think beyond the boundaries of your own field, and you cannot have solutions dictated to you either by media or the tech industry". Grassegger is worried that the tech industry is racing forward much more quickly than the media. His ambition: not to be overtaken by politically radical powers seeking to use similar infrastructure for their own ends.

→ mediaforwardfund.org → spatz.news



Gesunde
Erde
Gesunde
Menschen



CIVIL
LIBERTIES
UNION FOR
EUROPE

GOOD
IMPACT

ALLIANZ
FOUNDATION

futur eins



Take on Responsibility, Strengthen the Community

With social cohesion starting to crumble and public opinion edging toward the extremes, many civil society organisations are working to foster a more humane (and digital) public sphere. They offer spaces for dialogue, address grievances, and offer concrete solutions including those that protect against manipulation and hate, all while respecting the fundamental rights of all parties. Publix provides a secure platform for key actors working at the intersection of politics and society.



Photo: Marcus Glahn

Trust is at the heart of it

Katarina Peranic, Executive Director, **More in Common**

Publix is a space for organisations committed to strengthening democracy, and this is exactly our mission. We achieve it by conducting robust public opinion research and translating it into practical action. Several times a year, we undertake representative surveys across Germany on painful topics such as climate change, migration, the future of society, and social cohesion. On the basis of our results, we advise clubs, associations, and non-profit organisations that contribute to strengthening democracy.

We try to understand how people across Germany actually think, not just the loudest members of the periphery that dominate the debates, but the whole spectrum. We pay particular attention to a group we call the invisible third. Representing about 30 per cent of the population, these are people who have turned away from the political system because they feel neither seen nor heard. Here on Hermannstraße, you'll find the invisible third on every street corner.

Trust emerges wherever people meet one another and discover that though they see things differently, they have a lot in common. Trust is at the heart of social cohesion: on the one hand, citizens need to trust that, despite their differences, they can continue talking to one another. On the other – and this is where the real imbalance lies – we need public trust in democratic institutions as well as government trust in the public.

Too often, decisions in politics, business, and other arenas are driven by personal im-

pressions: conflict, division, negative narratives. But what do people in Germany actually think? Where do we find commonalities?

Our quantitative and qualitative research seeks to find out. The raw data we assess comes from renowned opinion research institutes. We are now active in seven countries, and the international comparisons we've been able to make are teaching us a great deal about polarizing topics.

Based on these experiences, we've developed a training program: a workshop that we've given to around 50 organisations in the last five years. One particularly inspiring example is the award-winning Metropolis project in Dresden. Following the events that occurred with Pegida and the split that opened up in her family, one Dresden woman came up with a new space for conversation: on the four-seat benches at the end of the city's trams. Urban planners and the public transport authority saw what a valuable initiative it was and have since contracted her to hold conversations there on particular topics. 30 per cent of the people that joined those conversations belong to the invisible third, which is wonderful.

As for social cohesion, things aren't going quite as well at the moment. Academia alone will not solve it, civil society alone will not solve it, business alone will not solve it, nor will politics or the media. For me personally, it is extremely encouraging to see creative individuals coming up with solutions, getting involved, and tackling incredibly difficult challenges for themselves. It gives me confidence.



A Stage for Debate and Dialogue

Events at **Publix**

A resilient society thrives on its capacity for self-interrogation, renewal, and development. The media make that ongoing conversation possible: by telling local stories and holding power to account at the national level, by creating spaces where people feel heard and represented. Rapid digital change is putting this ecosystem under enormous pressure. By providing infrastructure and a platform as a host and organiser of events that increase visibility and expand their reach, Publix strengthens the projects, initiatives, and organisations whose expertise and dedication are meeting these challenges.

Over 200 readings, book launches, workshops and panel discussions take place in the building every year. These events give academic, editorial, and civil society representatives from Germany and across Europe a chance to come to this central location in the capital and present their perspectives, to discuss the issues, and to further develop their thoughts for an extensive audience. To that end, the Forum at Publix can hold up to 200 people and there are conference rooms for 10 to 80 people.

Publix's diverse program is supplemented by well-curated, high-profile evening events

with leading politicians and representatives from the fields of journalism, civil society, education, and tech. The talk series, Publix Thursday, is designed to spark new conversations and attract a broad audience. In 2025, more than 2,000 tickets were sold.

"With the Publix Thursdays, we're able to reach a very broad audience, something which many NGOs, as well as non-fiction books and research projects find it difficult to achieve by themselves" says Katharina Klün, program director at Publix. "That creates additional visibility for our partners in the building as well." Through its public events program, Publix brings experts and engaged members of the public into direct conversation. Our events help to close the gap between the work of civil society, politics, business, academia, the media, and everyone who understands the transformation of the information landscape and wants to take action.

You'll find all our current events at publix.de/en/program.

The Publix building is also available for your events. Learn more at publix.de/en/booking.



PIPE UP!



SALON
5



Shaping ✂ Media, Supporting People



How is the news produced? How do you recognize fake news? To navigate a public sphere shaped by digital technology, you need media literacy. All over Germany, Publix supports the most important news providers and creates innovative new means of participating, particularly for children and young adults, so that they can understand and shape the media. This way, they can experience for themselves why independent journalism is indispensable for a democratic society.



Language as Key

Schokofeh Kamiz, Project Manager with **Pipe Up! – the Word Workshop**

I don't have anything against conventional school curricula. But I believe in unconventional teaching programs at schools. That's where Pipe Up! comes in. We're a multimedia storytelling program that empowers Neukölln school pupils and encourages critical thinking.

Our word workshop is a collaboration with WIR MACHEN DAS and Publix, while Maria Exner and WIR MACHEN DAS came up with the idea. The project is funded by the Schöpfung Foundation and, as of this year, several additional funders. Publix and WIR MACHEN DAS have been decisive in enabling and bolstering the project. Without their financial support and their leverage in opening necessary doors, the project simply wouldn't have been possible. Indeed, it is precisely these hurdles that trip up so many other projects. Schools cannot achieve these things by themselves.

We began our work with Publix here in the neighbourhood in 2025. Present either during normal lessons or special project days, we are now fully embedded in four Neukölln schools: the Regenbogen Primary School, Karl-Weise Primary School, Albrecht-Dürer *Gymnasium*, and Albert Schweitzer *Gymnasium*. We currently work with eight freelance workshop facilitators and are expanding the team further.

With the majority of pupils in Neukölln schools speaking at least two languages at home, multilingualism is a central part of our workshops. We give students the tools to express themselves and to find their place in society. We often begin with automatic writing exercises whereby they simply lay out their thoughts for three minutes. Then we move

on to creative writing, after which they can either share their texts with the group or simply hold on to them. Next, they write a letter to someone they like, or someone they don't, whichever they prefer. After that, we talk about how to write a petition. How do you express dissatisfaction without rage or violence? In a democratic society, how do you gather behind you people who share your point of view and thus move past feeling powerless?

What we start in schools, we continue here at the Publix building. We regularly bring the students here and use the Box on the ground floor. A lot goes through their heads simply thanks to the change of place and by taking a walk through the neighbourhood on their way to the building. Then it all comes pouring out on arrival. The kids decide for themselves if they want to write an essay or a spoken word text, dance to a choreography, record a podcast, or shoot a video. They often do the practical part in the Publix studio, where they can see their ideas come to life. We brought several classes here last year and the kids were genuinely overjoyed.

One of their teachers told me recently that she could see the change in them already, and it had only been four months. We once went to an exhibition in the Museum of Prints and Drawings (Kupferstichkabinett) together and the 10-year-olds listened to an art historian for two hours, taking notes and asking really attentive questions, which their teachers were really pleased to see of course. It's very fulfilling to see the kids genuinely opening up after just a few weeks.

Pipe Up! – the Word Workshop
puts young people and their views
centre stage.

“At Pipe Up! I can
be myself.”

— Shaghayegh, 10 years old



Taking their everyday lives
in Berlin Neukölln as a
point of departure, they
learn to find and develop
their voices through writing
and media workshops.

“The studio at Publix is really nice,
and the garden with tombstones
is pretty strange, especially when
you’re there with your pen and
paper doing creative writing exer-
cises. It really makes you think.”

— Mo, 17 years old



“I wish we could keep
doing it for longer – that
we had more time.”

— Elyas, 11 years old



Photos: Marcus Glahn (left), Frederic Gaillard (right)

Led by Schokofeh Kamiz, Pipe Up! is a
community project organised by Publix
and WIR MACHEN DAS.



→ Lie Detectors'
Berlin team



Lie Detectors

Our work to strengthen democratic media literacy across Europe rests on three pillars: providing teachers and pupils with comprehensive media literacy, conducting rigorous impact research, and advising policy makers on how to strengthen democratic resilience.

Our Berlin office at the Publix building serves as a base to put this concept into action throughout Germany. From here, we work with over 300 journalists that have undergone our training and work in 15 federal states, either as freelancers or in cooperation with editorial teams such as those at ZDF, MDR and SR. They visit with school classes and train teachers. We also direct our cooperation with

German partners here in Publix. This includes Journalism Goes to School which is also part of the Publix network.

For Lie Detectors, combining extensive reach with meaningful impact is essential. Thanks to new funding, we will be expanding into regions with the greatest need, and into Eastern Europe, by 2031. We'll also be helping to establish common scientific standards for evaluating impact. To support our focus on Eastern Europe, Lie Detectors is also considering expanding its presence at its Publix office.

Our goal is to have media literacy alongside reading and writing as part of UNESCO and OECD standards on the human right to education. Every one of our school visits further consolidates an informed society.



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interface I

Shaping the Conversation About Technology and the Common Good

What place does the human being have in a world pervaded by artificial intelligence? What abilities are genuinely human qualities? The power of judgement, responsibility, empathy? An ability to put social phenomena into context? Can common-good-oriented work have a greater impact if people use technology responsibly and with the necessary sensitivity for society, the environment and their own particular remit? This is the conversation we're having at Publix, and it includes the wider public.



“We’re not tech pessimists”

Stephanie Hankey, Co-Founder of **Tactical Tech**

Polar Inertia. This is what Stephanie Hankey must feel when she looks back on the last 20 years. She founded Tactical Tech in Britain in 2003 with Marek Tuszynski “to think about how technology could be used in the public interest, not for economic gain” she says. The challenges she and Marek were pointing to even back then are among the most important today. “We were joking recently that we should change the slogan to ‘Tactical Tech: we told you so!’”

Big tech, autocrats, corporations, and parliamentarians seem to have no interest in how humanity can use digital technology – artificial intelligence in particular – for the common good. They’re more concerned with economic competitiveness, technological rivalry, and geopolitics. “It’s frustrating just how slow policy makers are to react. The EU has made some progress, but we can’t wait for everything to be resolved by regulations” says Hankey, who thinks even more quickly than she speaks.

Tactical Tech helps people understand that digital technology doesn’t have to be an unavoidable force shaping their lives; it can and must be shaped by people themselves. Their programs are designed for multipliers: schools, libraries, community centres, cultural institutions, media organisations, NGOs, and research institutes. Active in over 90 countries, with more than 500 project partners

worldwide, and directed by a small team in Berlin Neukölln, Tactical Tech is “more like a B2B NGO”.

The best way to learn about the various levels of digital culture is to jump in. That’s why Tactical Tech uses interactive methods and creative forms of storytelling. One current program deals with a possible social media ban for young people. “A lot of decision makers and parents think they understand the problem because they’ve read about it” says Hankey, insisting that this cannot serve as the basis of an informed decision. Tactical Tech uses *shoulder checks* to explain what young people experience online and how algorithms negatively influence their emotions. “Then we talk about why technology is designed like this. What’s the business model behind it? Why do people do this? Is banning it a good idea? Are there other options?”

The program has attracted considerable interest in Scotland. “We’ve been working with children’s rights organisations, the police, and education ministries, and we’re planning to support Parliament in its decision-making as well.” Hankey emphasizes the fact that Tactical Tech does not have a political agenda, and that it is not a political group. “We’re not tech pessimists” she says. Instead, it’s about providing people with a different perspective and evidence-based information, so they can re-

“It is genuinely wonderful to be with people who share the same values and ideas. The shared space makes you feel like you’re part of something bigger.”

Stephanie Hankey, Co-Founder of Tactical Tech

flect on it and decide for themselves: whether it’s about life with AI, machine ethics, digital rights, or respectful behaviour online. “We call it critical media literacy”.

Hankey favours taking a realistic look at what technology can be. She wishes there were a broader debate about the fact that not everything that is technologically possible makes sense. “We need to hold on to the things that make us human.” This is at the heart of journalistic work: which (AI) tools will media workers use in the future to do accurate and independent journalism? This is not a purely technological question but an ethical and strategic one. And it’s one that the Tactical Tech team at Publix can always examine anew.

“Publix is very close to my heart”, says Stephanie Hankey. Designing technology to have a socially sustainable impact has always been her greatest concern. For that reason, she was part of the committee tasked with laying out everything the building should be capable of. Publix was conceived as a shared workplace and meeting place for journalists, NGOs, and the wider public in Berlin. “It is genuinely wonderful to be with people who share the same values and ideas. The events bring the building to life, and the shared space makes you feel like you’re part of something bigger.” The fact that the Publix building is so well equipped and so beautiful has just one disadvantage: “Sometimes people think we’re seriously rich.”

Can Technology Strengthen Democracy 🔍?



The Conference Series
Reporting the Machines



In December 2025, the Publix conference Reporting the Machines created a space in which people from the fields of journalism, academia, civil society, politics, and technology could reflect on AI, democracy, and the future. The focus was not on the technology itself, but on people: who develops AI, who controls it, who takes responsibility for it, and how it changes social relations of power.

With almost 180 participants, the one-day conference made clear just how important independent technology journalism is for a democratic public sphere. Experts showed that debates about AI don't only raise technological issues but also questions of justice, participation, and public accountability.

Again and again, one message emerged: good journalism does more than explain technological systems; it explains what those systems mean for people's lives. Reporting the Machines formed part of the Publix Tech Journalism Fellowship, through which at least five journalists will receive fellowships in 2026 and 2027.

That there were more than 80 applicants to the first round made clear the need for independent, evidence-based knowledge about technological developments among journalists. Reporting the Machines showed how effective it can be when journalism, developments in technology, and academics from different disciplines are all brought together. The conference will take place again in winter 2026.

The Building



Publix is a unique new building. It was conceived jointly by architects, journalists, and NGOs.

Its defining feature is a design that combines an open ground floor, accessible to everyone, with secure upper floors dedicated to investigative reporting, innovation, and collaboration.

Across 4,000 square metres, the building strengthens an extremely valuable resource: the people doing essential work on the defining challenges of the future, even in times of crisis.



How Publix is Funded

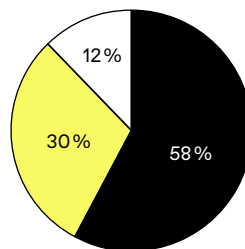
“Publix is more important than ever: we need to stand up for democracy and independent opinion formation.” Hans Schöpflin, Founder

Publix is a common-good-oriented, non-profit organisation. The operation of the building is financed primarily through its own revenue and supplemented by funding from foundations and additional donors. A significant part of our budget comes from the use of our facilities: organisations and co-workers in the Publix building pay monthly contributions for their workspaces, for event, workshop and production rooms as well as for overnight accommodation. This revenue was supplemented in 2025 by funding from the Schöpflin Foundation, the Mercator Foundation Switzerland and the ZEIT STIFTUNG BUCERIUS as well as through donations from our Friends of Publix.

This revenue finances the day-to-day operation of the building. Additional funding is earmarked for specific programs such as the Tech Journalism Fellowship which is funded by the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, or the Nina Grunenberg Fellowship, which is funded by the Wübben

Stiftung, the ZEIT STIFTUNG BUCERIUS and the Schöpflin Stiftung. The white paper “Ways out of the Media Crisis: Common-Good-Oriented Journalism as a Model for the Future” was supported by four foundations from across the DACH region.

Publix’s overall budget for 2025 was roughly 2.5 million euros.



- 58 % revenue generated through the use of office space and other infrastructure
- 30 % funding from the Schöpflin Foundation
- 12 % donations and additional funding

Our funding model is designed to reliably translate commercial revenue into impact for the common good. As part of this approach, non-profit organisations are able to use our facilities at reduced rates, while commercial users pay market prices. This creates the foundation for Publix’s long-term financial sustainability.

How Supporters Experience Our Impact



Jessica Staschen ZEIT STIFTUNG BUCERIUS

“To create a place with such charisma in the middle of Berlin Neukölln, where new journalistic endeavours can be tried out, common-good-oriented organisations can cooperate seamlessly with each other and where the door is open to everyone... this is what Publix has managed to do since opening. Journalism needs this capacity for innovation, and it has been our conviction to support this work as founding funders from the beginning”.



Johannes Steigmaier Publix Freundeskreis

“Democracy is an incredible achievement for our country, and I’m very grateful that I’ve been able to experience it growing up here in Germany. It is the foundation of the freedom we enjoy here and it means a great deal to me personally. Freedom of the press is an essential part of that foundation, and it should be vigorously defended! Publix provides independent journalism with a home and facilitates open encounters and conversations with members of the public. I am happy to support this valuable impact as one of the Friends of Publix!”



Tim Göbel Schöpflin Stiftung

“The upheavals in media and the democratic public sphere have been occupying us as a foundation for some time. If journalism is to fulfil its role as a fourth estate, it needs more than just new revenue models. It needs to make its voice heard over the constant din of the digital sphere. For new forms and initiatives for public debates, it is important to have spaces in which members of the media, civil society, and the digital world can come together. This is why we created Publix: a place that provides infrastructure and serves as a laboratory for the future of journalism and the public sphere.”

Outlook



↑ The Publix Guesthouse on the 5th Floor

Once the opening phase reaches completion, we'll be starting a new chapter in 2026: Every day, Publix welcomes new people and organisations that use our infrastructure or work together with us on particular projects. It's through their work, their cooperation and their ideas that Publix has its impact.

We understand our mission as follows: Publix offers security and shapes the spaces in which journalists, organisations, and initiatives come together and work on the future of journalism and the public sphere. We test out new endeavours and new ways of

collaborating under social and technological conditions that are constantly changing. At the same time, we take a firm stand against attacks on journalism and civil society here and now.

In the years to come, the work and outlook of people here at Publix will be still more secure. We want to support common-good-oriented journalism in all its diversity, both locally and internationally. We want to consolidate our networks, develop new media programs and endeavours, start new conferences and fellowships, and put leading politicians on our stages.

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publix.de

If the open society is to
have a future 🌈, it needs
people willing to invest in
its foundations. Join us 🙌!

I'd be delighted to
hear from you!

Lea Bayer

Fundraising Lead

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